

Celebrating 20 years

This spring marks TLC's 20th year of protecting special places throughout British Columbia. For our birthday we are celebrating you: our members, donors, volunteers and partners. TLC could not protect any of the endangered ecosystems or thousands of species that call B.C. home without you.

We are reminded of our gratitude acutely as we remember and mourn the loss of those who shaped TLC through their leadership and wisdom. Vic Derman, Saanich Councillor and founding member of TLC, and John Shields, our former Director of Operations.

Taking a passion for the environment and an idea of what could be, Vic rallied support for a worthy cause and helped create this land trust in 1997. John Shields was recruited to lead staff at a time when the Board was launching an extremely complex restructuring process. With his compassion and integrity he led TLC through tough negotiations and ensured that the priorities and values of TLC prevailed.

These losses have been hard on all of us, but we will be forever grateful for the gifts that these two trailblazers have bestowed upon us.

TLC and the thousands of acres of sensitive land we have protected are the accumulation of the efforts of each and every one of us. Without you we would not be the organization we are today nor have accomplished all that we have.

In March we received our Certificate of Completion from the Supreme Court of B.C. in our *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) process. TLC has emerged from creditor protection to continue our conservation efforts as a newly restructured land trust. The properties transferred to our partners are now receiving new levels of care as their guardians focus their attentions on thoughtful, long-term stewardship. TLC continues to own seven properties and holds 250 covenants throughout the B.C.

In this edition of the LANDmark you will read about the community that we are honoured to work alongside and a number of opportunities for you to get involved.

Our team is celebrating our 20th year by embarking on restoration projects to remove invasive species and nurture native plant species. For those looking to get

because of you!

out to a TLC covenant without a pair of clippers, our Covenant Program has a full season of monitoring ahead. Whether hiking to spectacular peaks in the Sooke Hills or harvesting at a community orchard in the city, TLC's volunteer monitoring team is always encountering wonderful vistas. If you are interested in gardening we are always welcoming new volunteers at Abkhazi Garden.

Every success TLC achieves in conservation is because of you. I look forward to catching up with you at one of our events this year as we celebrate our 20 years in conservation.



Cathy Armstrong
Executive Director



University of Victoria students join in on restoration efforts to keep invasive species at bay. Photo credit Torrey Archer.



Partners in conservation, CRD and HAT join TLC in ensuring the protection of Mt. Manuel Quimper. Photo credit Torrey Archer.



Volunteers assist in winter covenant monitoring at Packford. Photo credit Torrey Archer.

Covenant Monitoring: A Volunteer's Tale

By Monica Hammond
Covenant Program Volunteer

I have had two very different covenant monitoring experiences since joining The Land Conservancy as a volunteer this fall. The first was at the Atkins Road Covenant; Seven stalwart volunteers along with staff from the Capital Regional District and TLC worked towards restoring the land to its natural state by pulling St. Johns Wort. For four hours! It was backbreaking, blister-inducing work, but what fun!

The Atkins Road Covenant is right off the Galloping Goose trail. Four of us had loaded up a stretcher with St. Johns Wort, covered it with a tarp and tied it with rope. We walked the stretcher down the trail towards the truck which would take the fruits of our labours to the CRD headquarters. People on the trail looked sideways at us – a group of four fairly respectable-looking (although muddy) people hauling a tarp-covered stretcher down the trail. What on earth?

My second covenant monitoring experience was completely different. I met Torrey Archer, TLC's Covenant Manager, and a group of UVic students near Sooke to monitor the Packford Covenant. Our objective was to find a seasonal stream

that was said to be on the property. So off we went in the pouring rain, four 20-something students, the inimitable Torrey, and I, a woman in her late 50's who's always up for adventure. And what an adventure it was: bushwacking – zigzagging – through and around the property, including through a stand of 8-foot tall salal, until we found the stream.

Torrey explained to the students how to collect the data TLC needs to properly document the stream. Her gentle, humorous and informed teaching was inspiring. The other students and I learned a lot. By the time we were done we were drenched, but what a great day that was.

How lucky we are to live in British Columbia? What a beautiful place this is. And how lucky we are to have an organization like The Land Conservancy, with staff like Torrey Archer, who work so hard to preserve so many special places throughout the province for future generations. ■

To learn how you can get involved contact with the Covenant Program contact Torrey Archer at TLC by calling (250) 479-8053 or email covenants@conservancy.bc.ca.



Monica (center wearing green) with volunteers during a particularly wet winter covenant monitoring session at TLC's Packford Covenant. Photo credit Torrey Archer.



TLC volunteer Monica (far back) with bundles of successfully removed invasive species and other volunteers at the Atkins Road Covenant. Photo credit Doreen Derooin.



**Help Protect
B.C.'s Precious
Ecosystems**

Join our covenant monitoring volunteers this summer. For more info call Torrey at 1-877-485-2422.

Join TLC in celebrating 20 years in conservation for a

BLOOMING BROOM BASH

Volunteer with TLC & the Greater Victoria Green Team

APRIL 30 & MAY 13

RSVP by calling 1-877-485-2422



FREE LUNCH

Thank You for 20 Years!

TLC exists as a sustainable land trust dedicated to protecting places of ecological importance because of you. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a generous and tenacious community supporting our efforts.

Thank you for making our work possible.

TLC Board of Directors



TLC original artwork created by Briony Penn.

Abkhazi Garden
**PLANT-A-HOLICS
PLANT SALE**
Sunday, May 21
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
1964 Fairfield Road
Victoria

Restoring Ayum Creek Park with Lasagna Gardening

By Torrey Archer
Covenant Manager

TLC's Covenant Program started off with a bang this year: on Wednesday, March 8, approximately 30 Sooke high school students from Edward Milne Community School joined TLC and the Greater Victoria Green Team (GVGT) to tackle invasive species found at the Ayum Creek Regional Park Reserve.

Covenanted by TLC and Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT), and owned by the Capital Regional District, Ayum Creek Regional Park Reserve is 13.5 acres of mixed Douglas-fir and western hemlock forest. It features a creek that has undergone significant restoration to successfully bring the salmon (coho and chum species) back to its waters via the culturally and ecologically significant estuary that feeds into Coopers Cove.

The forest is currently in need of our help as several invasive species are wreaking havoc: periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) and false lamium (*Lamium galeobdolon*) are the most pressing dangers, but English ivy, English holly, daphne and Himalayan blackberry have all joined the attack too. TLC has picked up where our partners, HAT, have left off to stop the spread of these troublesome foes.

Our team worked to dig up the periwinkle before layering cardboard on top of the remains, adapting a permaculture technique called "lasagna gardening."

Lasagna gardening builds soil by adding different layers of material, eliminating the need to till and risk breaking up the healthy mycelium networks found within.

The cardboard layer is topped by mulch to effectively smother out the remaining invasive plants below. This is necessary as periwinkle is both drought- and heat-tolerant, and spreads by seeds and rhizomes (aka "runners"). The runners are the trickiest part – if even a shred of the root is left behind in the soil, the plant will grow right back!

By smothering the invasive species and starving them of light we hope to stop their spread while giving nutrients to the soil. The mulch also serves as a medium to plant native seedlings into. Planting will occur next spring after we determine that the invasives have been defeated!

To get involved with our next restoration event please contact 250-479-8053 or covenants@conservancy.bc.ca. ■

This restoration event was sponsored by:



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Volunteers from TLC, GVGT and Edward Milne Community School all pitch in to combat invasive species using a lasagna gardening technique. Photo credit Amanda Evans.

Leaving a Legacy to Abkhazi Garden

A TLC Member for more than 18 years, Jack was a hands-on volunteer at many of the land trust's sites, but no site saw more of Jack's passion and care than Abkhazi Garden. Jack lovingly cared for the garden weekly, alongside his team of committed volunteers, in an effort to keep this haven for gardeners accessible for the public to enjoy. Sadly Jack passed away in October at the age of 85.

To commemorate his legacy, TLC has created the *Jack Eldridge Memorial Fund for Abkhazi Garden* from the generous bequest Jack thoughtfully left the organization.

From the Ground Up

By Andrew MacKinnon
Conservation Manager

The last few months have been ground-breaking at TLC. While our sure-footing is felt through all facets of the organization, no site has felt this more than Abkhazi Garden.

Much of the stonework in the garden had begun to show its age. In some cases mortar was crumbling, rocks had started to flake off and some of the walking surfaces had become uneven.

In an effort to have restoration projects completed for the annual open house on April 1st, TLC reached out to donors to help support the garden. The response was uplifting: the Dalglish Family Foundation committed to matching donations up to \$20,000.

On the ground, CBS Masonry, a local contractor, began refurbishing areas that weren't beyond repair and for other sections, completely rebuilding them from the ground up, literally.

Work started in a small section close to the pond which had collapsed. Excavating the stone showed a foundation of mixed soil, asphalt and other debris. CBS Masonry

"The Board and I are honoured to announce the creation of the *Jack Eldridge Memorial Fund for Abkhazi Garden* with an initial investment of \$100,000," said Cathy Armstrong, TLC Executive Director. "Now mortgage free, the future of the garden is more secure than ever before. Jack's passion to see Abkhazi Garden protected for the community to enjoy will remain a lasting legacy."

Donors can make tax-deductible contributions to the *Jack Eldridge Memorial Fund for Abkhazi Garden* by giving to the Victoria Foundation, donating to TLC or designating a gift in their estate planning. ■

went about laying a completely new foundation of gravel and then rebuilding the flat area with new stones. The replacement of the stone step in front of the Summer House followed. The uneven and loose rock was removed and set aside for reuse in the garden and a foundation was put in. New rock was added to create a level and smooth step across the front of the building.

The most time consuming job was the removal of a full set stairs from the garden path to the patio. The masons built the new stairs from the foundation up with new level stones. Other work completed included refurbishing two shorter sets of stairs. The old mortar was removed, the stones were washed and then re-laid with new mortar.

Stonework restoration has been our focus at Abkhazi Garden this spring. Once the busy summer season is complete TLC plans on tackling the major job of replacing the Teahouse patio. We hope the results will be as spectacular as the work completed and will last the Garden for another 60 years. ■



Top: Abkhazi Garden is the recipient of a 'Canada 150 Garden Experience' designation, awarded by the Canadian Garden Council in collaboration with the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association. Photo credit Dennis Robinson. Bottom: Stonework to restore the stairways reusing original stones. Photo credit Andrew MacKinnon.

TLC is honoured to be the recipient of donations in memory of:

Patricia Davy • Victor Derman
Robin Edwards • Isabelle Hare
Heiko Socher • John Shields

To remember your loved one with a special gift, call 1-877-485-2422 or visit conservancy.bc.ca

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Interested in joining TLC's Board of Directors?

Contact 1-877-485-2422 or admin@conservancy.bc.ca for more details.